Coogee Boys' Preparatory School

Anti- Cyber Bullying Policy & Protocols

Cyberbullying can usually be defined as any offensive or aggressive behaviour directed at another person (or group), which may affect them mentally, emotionally or socially.

Cyberbullying includes SMS, IM messages or images posted on personal websites or transmitted via email or mobile telephones. Negative postings or blogs on Facebook, My Space, chat-rooms or social networking communities is also considered cyber-bullying.

Cyberbullying is similar to real life bullying but differs in the following ways:

- Can be difficult to escape and invasive as it can occur 24/7 and a person can be targeted whilst at home
- Can involve harmful material being widely and rapidly disseminated to a large audience
- Can provide the bully with a sense of relative anonymity and distance from the victim, so there is a lack of immediate feedback or consequences.

At no time should any student access Facebook, My Space or chat-rooms whilst at school. All mobile telephones should be left in the School Office during school time (see Mobile Telephone Policy).

Cyber-Bullying Under Law:

The Commonwealth's Criminal Code Act 1995, section 4.7.4.17 notes that it is an offence for a person to use 'a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence'.

The Commonwealth's Criminal Code Act 1995, section 4.7.4.15 notes that it is an offence for a person to use 'a carriage service to make a threat'.

The Commonwealth's Crimes Act 1914, part VIIB, section 85ZE notes that it is an offence for 'a person to knowingly or recklessly use a telecommunications service supplied by a carrier in such a way as would be regarded by reasonable persons being, in all the circumstances, offensive'.

Prevention:
- Students should consider using caller ID blocking to hide their telephone number when making calls
- Don't leave your name on your voicemail or give your details to people you don't know or don't want to know.

If you are being harassed please take the following actions:

Students:

- Tell your teacher or parents as they can help you do something about it.
- Leave the area or stop the activity – people who bully enjoy seeing the reactions of their victims
- Block the sender's message if the bullying is by email or IM
- **Never reply to bullying messages.**

Parents:

- Keep a record of who sent the messages, the date and the time
- Advise your service provider as most providers have appropriate use policies that restrict users from harassing others and can respond to your report
- Report to Police if the bullying includes physical threats. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile telephone or any other form of communication to menace, harass or offend another person. Most users can be traced and therefore your report can be followed up.

Protocol:

- Ensure the student is safe and reassure them that the matter will be taken seriously
- Contact the parents, alert them to the issues and ask them to meet with the Class Teacher
- With the agreement of the student and parents, the Class Teacher, Deputy Head and Headmaster can assist the student to work through the effects of the cyberbullying and help them develop and implement effective coping strategies
- Gather information regarding the cyberbullying and if possible identify the bully/ies
- Discuss the prevention strategies (as outlined above) with the student.